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SPI-Water



Science-Policy interfacing in support of the water framework directive implementation

Final conference – Brussels 30&31 october 2008

Conclusions of the Workshop 5

The Workshop 5 present the main recommendations and organise an interactive discussions with participants on **how to make these recommendations operational**: which pre-conditions, which steps, how to get organised, how to link with parallel (on-going) initiatives, etc.

Presentation by Katharina on the objectives and activities of WP3

In WP5: Natacha presenting the main recommendations – specific focus of interactive discussions on three recommendations dealing with (a) scientific-political interfacing platform, (b) the support team, operational interface and (c) developing participatory process of the research.

In WP6: specific activities of the SPI-Water project presented, mainly (i) lessons from WISE-RTD use in the Litani river basin, (ii) building partnership between Sebou and Jucar and (iii) twinning agreements – lessons from experience.

Main discussion points

- The possibility to implement some of the SPI-Water recommendations in areas with conflicts was raised. Minimum requirements for these recommendations to be implemented could be identified (e.g. a minimum level of political stability).
- Promoting networking among researchers will help strengthening links between scientific community actors. This will enhance the legitimacy of scientists nominated in platforms, working groups, etc.
- The issue of “How to ensure that IWRM concepts disseminate at lower levels within river basin” was raised. This might lead to the establishment of platforms at different levels which need to be integrated/linked.
- Training remains an important element of any approach. Some EU MS are already actively involved in training for ensuring appropriation by water managers. There is possibility for example to use EU funds (TAIEX) for such training (although there are some geographic constraints on the use of these funds).
- Twinning programmes could help facilitating conflict resolution on water between neighbouring countries. Indeed, the “twinner” could play the role of third party and facilitate links between water agencies that have conflicts.

- The WISE RTD platform could include lessons from past application in models and tools. This would help preventing that each country or expert goes through the same process of “trial and error”.
- There is no specific certification or evaluation process at EU scale for tools and methods (it only exists for monitoring – via CEN). Because of the importance of processes and stakeholder involvement, it is important that tools are not “too rigid” and can be adapted to local situations.
- Some platforms between scientists and policy makers already exist in the field of biodiversity. They were formed after long discussion process for agreeing on who could and should participate and what should be included in the memorandum of understanding linking the platform partners. This platform could be used as illustration/source of thoughts for the water sector.
- It is important that such platforms have an operational focus/operational implications and do not remain too general in their discussions.
- Scientists meeting in Stockholm, for example, have no problem to exchange among each other. However, when they go back home, they have difficulties to be heard by local policy makers.
- Partnership and twinning activities established by the Sebou water agency with Spanish and French partners have been presented.
- Twinning projects between basin organisations were presented.
- The United Nation could use the results of EU twinning projects or the SPI-Water project as illustrations for non-EU countries (including developing countries). The right channel for sharing results and information would need to be identified. But the UN could play a role.

Main conclusions

- It is important that the different recommendations proposed for strengthening the science-policy interface keep a clear operational focus.
- Platforms would need to be developed at different scales, from local to national to regional levels.
- There is more work required on pre-conditions for the different recommendations to be implemented.
- Twinning projects should not be “unilateral streams” of information from EU to non-EU countries, but platforms for sharing principles, knowledge, approaches and tools between river basin organisations from different countries. It is important to stress that the WFD offers a methodology that needs to be adapted for supporting IWRM. It is not an end in itself.
- To enhance its relevance, the WISE-RTD portal should not be limited to information and references. Indeed, it should facilitate access to databanks, models, lessons from the

application of models under different conditions, etc. The issue of the right on knowledge, information and data was raised. This is to be considered to assess what can be provided in the WISE-RTD portal.

- A platform between scientist and policy makers could be accompanied by an internet forum. However, this needs to be well managed and targeted to concrete issues, output, actions....
- A document on “lessons learnt” from SPI-Water non EU activities could be developed for wider dissemination. Synergies between Unesco and EC could be made in this process.